



FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION, Washington, DC 20429

SHEILA C. BAIR  
CHAIRMAN

August 31, 2009

Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter concerning Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation travel policies.

I understand your concern regarding recent press coverage of government agencies prohibiting staff from attending conferences in Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada. The FDIC does not have any travel or conference policy that discriminates against specific U.S. cities. In conducting our own internal conferences, we are fortunate to have a large FDIC conference facility in Arlington, Virginia, where most of our FDIC conferences are held. We also require that conference planners take into consideration other factors including the adequacy of rooms and facilities, security and safety, and public perception. If conference planners proposed going to Las Vegas for a conference, the over-riding factor in the decision-making process would be cost, not location.

If you have further questions or comments, please contact me at 202-898-6974 or Paul Nash, Deputy for External Affairs, at 202-898-6962.

Sincerely,

Sheila C. Bair



STEVEN T. WALTHER  
CHAIRMAN

August 7, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

In response to your letter of July 28, 2009, I am pleased to advise you that the Federal Election Commission does not consider any specific U.S. cities, including Las Vegas and Reno, as inappropriate venues for official agency travel and meetings, regardless of whether they are considered resort or vacation destinations.

The Federal Election Commission typically hosts three regional conferences at a variety of locations around the United States in each two year election cycle. These conferences usually attract approximately 100 attendees and are funded in large part by the registration fees paid by attendees. In order to make the conferences attractive to the greatest number of potential attendees, we aim to host the conferences in a variety of geographic regions and in locations with convenient air travel service. The conferences venues are selected with these considerations in mind, and we use a cost-benefit analysis to select particular cities and their conference facilities. Below is a list of locations and dates for our regional conferences held in the 2007-2008 election cycle and scheduled for the 2009-2010 election cycle.

Location	Dates
Seattle, Washington	September 26-27, 2007
St. Louis, Missouri	November 6-7, 2007
Orlando, Florida	February 12-13, 2008
Chicago, Illinois	September 15-16, 2009
San Francisco, California	October 28-29, 2009
New Orleans, Louisiana	February 9-10, 2010

Additionally, we typically offer several conferences in Washington, DC each election cycle as well.

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
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Further, there is no policy or practice to deny reimbursement to any Commissioner or member of our staff, for travel or other appropriate expenses, when attending conferences, events or meetings in any specific U.S. cities, including Las Vegas, Reno, or any other city the State of Nevada.

We trust that this information responds to your request of July 28, 2009. Please do not hesitate to contact us again if you or your staff would like further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven T. Walther". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" being more prominent than the last name "Walther".

Steven T. Walther  
Chairman



BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
OF THE  
**FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM**  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20551

BEN S. BERNANKE  
CHAIRMAN

August 11, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

I am responding to your letter of July 28, 2009, in which you express concern that an agency's travel policy may discriminate against specific U.S. cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno. The Travel Policy of the Board of Governors does not identify any cities or destinations as inappropriate for official travel. An employee's division director or designee is authorized to approve a travel request, which is generally done on a case-by-case basis.

When reviewing a request for travel authorization, the approving official takes into consideration the business needs of the Board, which would include staff development and training, as well as any budget limitations. Each division at the Board establishes a budget for travel, and decisions regarding a request for travel take into account the justification for the trip and the costs and benefits for that division.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if you have any further questions on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely of Ben S. Bernanke, is positioned below the word "Sincerely,". The signature is stylized and cursive.



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH &amp; HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management  
Washington, D.C. 20201

AUG 18 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-7012

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter of inquiry concerning the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) policy regarding official travel for our employees that might discriminate against specific U.S. cities. I am writing on behalf of the Secretary to confirm that the HHS travel policy regarding official travel is consistent with the policy articulated by the White House Chief of Staff's letter dated July 14, 2009.

If you have any questions or concerns, please have a member of your staff contact either me or Paul Hoffmann, the HHS Director of Travel Policy and Programs, at [paul.hoffmann@hhs.gov](mailto:paul.hoffmann@hhs.gov) or (202) 690-7960.

Sincerely,

E.J. Holland, Jr.  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Suite 309-F  
Washington, DC 20201  
(202) 690-7431  
[Ned.Holland@hhs.gov](mailto:Ned.Holland@hhs.gov)

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

20 August 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

This is in response to your letter to the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) dated 28 July 2009, regarding travel restrictions to Las Vegas and Reno.

In your letter you asked that if the CIA had any restrictions on travel to any US city, particularly Las Vegas and Reno, that the restrictions be lifted. I have confirmed that the CIA has no restrictions on Agency travel to any US city, including Las Vegas and Reno.

Thank you for your letter and your continued dedication to national security. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (703) 482-6122.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. Danvers", written over a light-colored background.

William C. Danvers  
Director of Congressional Affairs



Office of the Chairman

## National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

AUG 14 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter of July 28, 2009, in which you express your concern about federal agency policy decisions that restrict travel to certain cities in the United States.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) does not have any policy either restricting or prohibiting staff travel to any U.S. city. As you are aware, NTSB staff travel to any city in which an accident has occurred. The NTSB will also send staff to conferences, seminars, or training sessions where the agency believes it can best explain its mission, advocate for its safety recommendations, or receive information that will assist its employees in accomplishing the NTSB's mission.

If you have any additional questions or concerns regarding NTSB travel policy, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-314-6662.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Deborah A.P. Hersman", is written over a faint, circular embossed seal of the NTSB.

Deborah A.P. Hersman  
Chairman



U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530  
August 11, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

This responds to your July 27, 2009, letter to the Attorney General regarding the Justice Department's travel policies. We share the view expressed by the White House Chief of Staff in his July 14 letter to you that "the test of government travel is what will be accomplished by that travel and whether the cost to the government is reasonable as opposed to other options." Accordingly, no policy of the Department or its component law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, prohibits official travel to, or holding a conference or meeting in, any city or location.

Consistent with the guidance cited in your letter, and as required by the Federal Travel Regulations, the Department selects official travel destinations and conference locations based on business need and the minimization of travel and other costs. The Assistant Attorney General for Administration (AAG/A) helps ensure that conference costs are minimized by reviewing all requests to hold predominantly internal conferences in non-federal facilities, as required by section 1173 of Public Law 109-162 (the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005). It is true that Department policy requires Component Heads to approve, before submission to the AAG/A, any such requests to hold conferences in resort and vacation areas. We do not, however, preclude such conference locations where they are cost effective. In fact, the Department has held more than two dozen official conferences in Nevada in the past eighteen months and I have no reason to doubt that we will continue to hold conferences in Nevada where appropriate for our business needs.

We are committed to wisely using taxpayer funds for our official travel and conferences without prohibiting travel to any U.S. city. Our travel guidance is premised on that goal. I hope this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Ronald Weich  
Assistant Attorney General



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON

August 7, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United State Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

This is in response to your letter concerning the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy regarding official travel to specific cities within the United States. You expressed concern that certain cities may be viewed as resort or vacation destinations and, therefore, inappropriate for Federal travel.

VA does not restrict its employees to travel to or arrange for conferences in any area of the country. Current policies require that employees, who travel or schedule VA-sponsored conferences for the purposes of work, exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would if traveling on personal business.

In fact, I spent July 21 in Las Vegas where I was the keynote speaker at a VA-sponsored event, the Annual Champions of Veterans Enterprise Awards Ceremony. This event was held by VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise in conjunction with the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual National Veterans Small Business Conference and Expo.

I hope this information is helpful to you. Thank you for your continuing support of our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eric K. Shinseki", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Eric K. Shinseki



## Office of Compliance

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August 21, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

I am in receipt of your correspondence of July 28, 2009, wherein you request my rejection or reversal of any agency travel policy that would discriminate against specific U.S. cities, Las Vegas and Reno, in particular. In your letter, you write of the benefits of Las Vegas and Reno for business and government travelers, and you request a written response regarding my agency's travel policy with respect to this issue.

I am pleased to report that the Office of Compliance engages in comprehensive evaluation of all travel conducted by our staff. Specifically, we utilize a cost/benefit analysis and justification process in determining the location of any meetings initiated by our agency, as well as determining the attendance of staff at meetings held by sister agencies.

The Office of Compliance agrees that the purpose, justification, cost/benefit ratio, and results achieved should be the guiding principles when scheduling conferences and/or official meetings.

Thank you for giving the Office of Compliance the opportunity to provide input on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Tamara E. Chrisler  
Executive Director



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

September 1, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

In response to your letter of July 28, 2009, I want to confirm that the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) does not have a policy in place that prohibits or discourages employees from traveling to specific destinations in the U. S. to conduct official business or attend meetings. The NRC's travel policy conforms to the Federal Travel Regulation. Our focus is on authorizing travel that is in the agency's best interest and is cost beneficial, not on whether or not a city is known as a resort or vacation destination.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Gregory B. Jaczko



9/9/09  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
The Secretary of Commerce  
Washington D.C. 20230

9/10/09  
to David L  
a

August 21, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Department of Commerce's (Department) travel policies. Your point is well taken that certain cities, such as Las Vegas and Reno, can offer value and convenience and should not be overlooked by the Government when considering locations for meetings and conferences.

Please be assured that the Department's policy does not prohibit employees from traveling to or conducting official business in specific U.S. cities. Departmental policy requires considering costs and ensuring that travel and meeting arrangements are in the best interest of the Government and taxpayers, regardless of destination.

You have been a leader in Congress in fostering economic recovery for American families and key industries such as tourism. I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss what I have been doing to focus the Department of Commerce's resources on creating jobs and growing American businesses. Specifically, the work of the Department's Office of Travel and Tourism within the International Trade Administration may be of interest to you.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or John Charles, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration, at (202) 482-8354.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Locke".  
Gary Locke



Office of the Chairman

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

September 9, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the Federal Trade Commission reject or reverse any agency policy regarding official travel for Commission employees that discriminates against specific U.S. cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada.

Let me assure you that the Commission has no policy prohibiting official agency travel to or meetings in Las Vegas, Reno, or any other U.S. locations known as vacation destinations. The purpose and associated costs of travel are the key factors considered when the Commission approves official travel, with the goal of advancing the agency's mission to promote competition and protect consumers at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.

With your letter, you have enclosed a copy of a letter to you from the Honorable Rahm Emanuel, White House Chief of Staff, in which Mr. Emanuel states that federal policy should not dictate the locations where government meetings and conferences are held, and that the test of government travel should be what will be accomplished by that travel, and whether the cost to the government is reasonable when compared to other options. You have requested confirmation that the Commission has adopted a travel policy consistent with the policy endorsed by Mr. Emanuel. I am able to confirm that the Commission's travel policy is entirely consistent with White House policy.

As always, we appreciate your interest in the Commission. Please let me know whenever we can be of service.

Sincerely,

Jon Leibowitz  
Chairman



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

AUG 17 2009

OFFICE OF  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

Thank you for your letter dated July 28, 2009, to Lisa Jackson, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), expressing your concern regarding the guidelines of some federal agencies that prohibit official travel to specific U.S. cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno. I have been asked to respond to your inquiry. I agree that cost-benefit factors should determine the location for official meetings and conferences. Please be assured that the EPA policy does not restrict travel to resort areas or vacation destinations, and that EPA policy is consistent with the views described by the President's Chief of Staff in his letter to you, dated July 14, 2009.

The EPA travel policy, dated November 14, 1995, states, "Resorts that offer an overall cost savings to the Agency, especially during off-season should not be avoided strictly because they are located in what is considered a resort. In all cases, especially where resort areas are involved, a cost comparison should be done to determine the most cost effective location."

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may call Sven-Erik Kaiser in EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at 202-566-2753.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Maryann Froehlich", is written above the typed name.

Maryann Froehlich  
Acting Chief Financial Officer